

COCHITUATE RAIL TRAIL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING
February 24, 2016

Name	Affiliation	Present	Absent
Josh Ostroff	Board of Selectmen (chair)	X	
Jamie Errickson	Director of Community and Economic Development		X
Geoff Lewis	Senior Planner	X	
Dick Cugini	Recreation and Parks Commission		X
John Magee	Bicycle and Pedestrian	X	
William Schoenig	Member at Large	X	
David Camacho	Member at Large (vice chair)	X	
Eric Jones	Member at Large		X
Peter Henry	Member at Large	X	
Jan Henderson	Member at Large (clerk)	X	

Also present: Bill McGrath (BETA Group). The meeting was called to order at 6:32 P.M. in the Dlott Meeting Room.

1. Introductions

Participants introduced themselves.

2. Design Updates

A. Project terminus request to MassDOT

At the last meeting the committee voted to recommend to terminate the trail at Willow Street, which is a public right-of-way. J. Ostroff sent an update to MassDOT, and BETA will revise the plans. This will be coordinated with the Route 27 redesign project (which is TIP approved for Federal FY '19). The redesign has 5' bike lanes in both directions on Rt. 27.

B. Utility Meetings

The MassDOT survey work at Rt. 9 has been completed, but the utility meeting has not been scheduled yet. They do have the plans in advance and come prepared. Working with utilities is a challenge for cities and towns.

C. Bridges

BETA did review the Rt. 30 crossing and the question about whether a change in road height would change the ramp length. B. McGrath explained that the old rail bed is only high by a few inches and would not save a lot of length on the ramp. It is also constrained by driveways. They will be able to tweak this in the final design to save what they can.

D. 25% status and Design Public Hearing

BETA now anticipates a public hearing this summer. It is usually scheduled 8-10 weeks after the utility meeting. There will be some cost savings now that we are not extending the trail

to the southern-most end with retaining walls etc. This savings can be applied to the final design. We cannot negotiate on easements until 75% design per the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), however we can have informal discussions. The categorical check list has to be signed off on first with each category documented (environmental, historic/archeological, etc.), then there is the public hearing. BETA thinks we may get NEPA approval midway through 75% design.

3. Acquisition Update

A. P & S Agreement

The Purchase and Sale (P&S) has been executed for \$6.345m. The price is less than they think it is worth today, meaning the value is higher, but CSX will claim that as a charitable donation to the Town. We are required to do environmental testing as a part of the agreement. Stantec will do that beginning in a couple of weeks. If they find toxic materials we can abandon that portion, or CSX can remedy it. The metes and bounds survey will begin shortly.

B. Appraisal

The appraisal is public. G. Lewis will share it with members who are interested in seeing it. The Finance Committee may ask for an appraisal review. The project will end up costing approximately \$14.7m total, none from property taxes, but it is good for the Town to do any research necessary to be accountable.

C. Survey

Discussed above.

D. Environmental Testing

Discussed above.

E. Friends of Natick Trails report

J. Magee reported that the incorporation documents are nearly complete. It usually takes 2-3 weeks once they are submitted to be approved. After that they can apply for tax exempt status. They need a legal name to sign an MOA with the Town and to collect donations. They meet March 7th and are open to having people from the public attend. G. Lewis will send them a graphic to use on their website.

F. Town Meeting articles (acquisition of Saxonville Branch/Wonderbread Spur)

These articles are being drafted.

4. Meeting Minutes

J. Ostroff made a motion to approve the minutes from 1/11/16, D. Camacho seconded, and the group voted to approve. J. Magee made a motion to approve the minutes from 2/2/16, P. Henry seconded and the group voted to approve.

5. March 21 Public Information Meeting

A. Program Overview

The meeting will include a comprehensive overview of the CRT Project by J. Ostroff and B. McGrath, including design, followed by questions and answers. The group will get the presentation PowerPoint in advance and comments should be sent to J. Ostroff. There could be a Friends Group announcement, if they are ready. In discussion W. Schoenig offered to shoot footage with a drone. The group thought that was a great idea.

B. Public Outreach

This is not the design public hearing, but it would be good to invite abutters and others to attend. If they comment at this meeting do they need to come to the public hearing and repeat their comments again? B. McGrath said that their comments can be read from the meeting minutes into the public record at the public meeting. G. Lewis will send invitations to the people who attended the last public meeting, Town Meeting members, the Friends Group, that Natick Center Associates, the Army Labs, MassDOT, the press and others. Pegasus will broadcast it.

6. Web Page

G. Lewis and J. Ostroff will review the Cochituate Rail Trail information on the town website: Natickma.gov. The FAQ page in particular needs to be updated before Town Meeting. If others review the site please let Josh know what issues you see.

7. New Business

J. Ostroff disseminated a budget for the CRT project which he put together for the Finance Committee. We have appropriated \$800K to date from Town Meeting and spent \$751K (BETA's work is not complete yet). We need to ask Town Meeting for \$2.5m this spring for acquisition. We will need to ask for \$50K at Fall Town Meeting for construction oversight. The funding comes from the mitigation funds for projects like the Paperboard Plant, and from the MathWorks Lakeside Campus.

8. Next Meeting – Will be March 21, 2016.

On a motion by J. Magee, seconded by P. Henry, the committee voted unanimously to adjourn the public meeting at 7:45 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by J. Henderson